

EXHIBIT F

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
AUSTIN DIVISION**

**BOOK PEOPLE, INC., VBK d/b/a BLUE §
WILLOW BOOKSHOP, AMERICAN §
BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION, §
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN §
PUBLISHERS, INC., AUTHORS §
GUILD, INC., COMIC BOOK LEGAL §
DEFENSE FUND,**

Plaintiffs,

v.

CASE NO.

**MARTHA WONG in her official capacity
as chair of the Texas State Library and
Archives Commission, KEVEN ELLIS in
his official capacity as chair of the Texas
Board of Education, MIKE MORATH in
his official capacity as Commissioner of
Education,**

Defendants.

DECLARATION OF MARY E. RASENBERGER

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, Mary E. Rasenberger declares:

1. My name is Mary E. Rasenberger. I am over twenty-one (21) years of age and am

fully competent to testify about the matters contained herein. The following statements are made within my personal knowledge and are true and correct.

2. I am the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) of the Authors Guild, Inc. (“Authors Guild” or “Guild”). I have held this position since 2014, when I joined the Guild (with a title change from Executive Director to CEO in 2020).

3. Authors Guild was founded in 1912 and is a national non-profit association of more than 13,000 professional, published writers of all genres, 483 of whom are located in Texas. It

DECLARATION OF MARY E. RASENBERGER

submitted an *amicus curiae* brief before the Circuit Court of Virginia Beach *In re: A Court of Mist and Fury* and *In re: Gender Queer, a Memoir*, in which a petitioner asked the court to find these two books obscene for unrestricted viewing by minors; the Court denied that request. It is currently a plaintiff before the Western District of Arkansas in *Fayetteville Public Library et al. v. Crawford County Arkansas et al.*, asking the court to declare portions of an Arkansas law unconstitutional for violating plaintiffs' rights to disseminate, receive, and read constitutionally protected books and other media.

4. The Guild counts historians, biographers, academicians, novelists, journalists, and other writers of non-fiction and fiction as members; many write for children or young adults, and are frequent contributors to the most influential and well-respected publications in every field. The Guild works to promote the rights and professional interest of authors in various areas, including copyright, freedom of expression, antitrust, fair contracts and artificial intelligence. Many Guild members earn a substantial portion of their livelihoods through their writing, and the ability to write freely and distribute their work is vital to their incomes, as well as to the culture.

5. The ability of Guild members to write on topics of their choosing and to have their work available through bookstores and libraries is vital to their ability to make a living in their chosen profession. Schools are a vital market for many Guild members, especially for children's, young adult, and crossover writers.

6. Guild members and their works are subject to House Bill 900 (the "Book Ban").

7. The rating system imposed by the Book Ban will effectively ban many educationally valuable books written by our members from schools. Books marked "sexually explicit" are expressly banned, even for students who are 18 and older, and books marked as "sexually relevant" are effectively banned, as they are highly unlikely to be included in official

curricula due to the difficulty of librarians getting written consent from parents to allow the books to circulate. This includes books where there is *any* reference to the sex of a person, anything related to people's sexuality, biology related to human or animal sexuality. Given the overbreadth, vagueness, and ambiguity of the law, book sellers will have to err far on the side of being over-inclusive in rating books as either "sexually explicit" or "sexually relevant". Many authors' books will undoubtedly be effectively banned in the significant Texas school market even when there is nothing remotely obscene or sexualized in them. As a result, our members will lose the entire Texas school market, which will adversely impact their incomes. Because many publishers and books sellers cannot practically sell different books to different markets, authors will lose school market throughout the country – which many children's, young adult, and literary classics authors rely upon.

8. The law also ignores the literary artistic, political, or scientific value of the work as a whole. The definitions in the Book Ban allow the State to cherry-pick terms and passages to justify removing books. Rating a book as either "sexually explicit" or "sexually relevant" will create the false impression that the book is obscene or pornographic. This stands to disproportionately apply to books that include LGBTQ+ or sexually active characters, which are often accused of containing obscenity even when they do not. As a result, the Book Ban would bar books from schools based on the political attitude that discussions of sexuality (especially LGBTQ+ sexuality) are "patently offensive" by their very nature.

9. Under the Book Ban, authors do not have any involvement in the rating process. This greatly increases the odds that their work will be mischaracterized by individuals determined to remove books based upon viewpoint discrimination. There is no recourse under the Book Ban for an author to protest a rating or attempt to provide context for the passages in question.

10. The Book Ban will lead to self-censorship among both authors and publishers, so that they can retain the school markets and avoid being offensively labelled. We have already seen this occur in other states such as Florida, where textbook publishers attempted to eliminate race from a discussion about Rosa Parks.

11. Given the influence of the Texas book market, this vague and ambiguous rating system could result in publishers not daring to publish some books out of fear that they would violate the Book Ban, which could devastate authors' incomes and careers.

12. The lack of guidance in the Book Ban makes it effectively impossible for authors to know how to meet its standards in their future works. Of the twenty books by Jodi Picoult that were banned in Florida, half of them didn't even have a kiss in them. The only surefire way to avoid a damaging rating under the Book Ban is to eliminate any reference to sex or sexuality altogether, which is impossible for most works about humans and biology, since most humans and animals have a sex (i.e., are male or female) and have children through sex. Further, because the Book Ban makes no distinction as to age, the censorship will cause authors who wish to sell to schools to avoid writing stories or books that address important issues that many teenagers experience in their lives or communities, including important topics like family, love, preventing or dealing with pregnancy. Like teachers, authors of books written for children and young adults know their audience – they are highly educated and deeply invested in understanding and speaking to the age group they are addressing. The Book Ban will censor authors' speech at the cost of the children's and teenagers' comprehension of their world, including some who are of or close to voting age. It is an attack on democracy itself.

13. I hereby declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the above is true and correct.

Executed this 24th day of July, 2023.

/s/ *Mary E. Rasenberger*
Mary E. Rasenberger